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AUTOTYPES OF CHAUCER MANUSCRIPTS.

FOREWORDS TO PART I.

I MEAN to have, in course of time, autotypes of all the chief Chaucer MSS. among the Society's publications. This, not because the illuminated ones look pretty, but to enable students who can't get at the MSS. to judge of their age and character. Among this first set I hoped to have issued autos of the Ellesmere MS., and the Cambridge Gg. 4. 27; but I have not yet been able to get leave to have these MSS. away from their Libraries to be photographt.[1] And when Mr Pretorius, who takes the negatives, was at Cambridge, time could only be found for the Boethius MS. to be done. So here are, besides, but the chief British Museum MSS., Mr Wynne's Hengwrt one, and the Corpus and Christ Church, Oxford, MSS. The rest will follow in due course, when the Texts of the *Canterbury Tales* and *Minor Poems* are done, and the Society has money enough to pay for more autotypes.

The Keeper and Deputy-keeper of the Manuscripts in the British Museum, my friends Mr E. A. Bond and Mr Maunde Thompson, have been good enough to compare the MSS. with Charters for me, and to date them in the following order :—

MSS.	DATES.
Harleian MS. 7334.	First quarter of the 15th century.
Lansdowne MS. 851.	
Corpus Christi MS., Oxford, 198.	First third of the 15th century.
Sloane MS. 851.	
Additional MS. 10,340 (Brit. Mus.), text.	
Cambridge Ii. 3. 21. (Boethius MS.).	
Additional 10,340 (Brit. Mus.), fly-leaf.	
Royal MS. 18 C II.	Middle of the 15th century.
Hengwrt MS. 154.	
Harleian MS. 1758.	
Additional MS. 16,165 (Shirley's).	
Harleian MS. 7333 (from Shirley).	
Christ Church MS. 152.	Second third of the 15th century.
Additional MS. 5140 (Brit. Mus.).	Third quarter of the 15th century.[2]

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The differences between this order and my own previous notions are, that Lansdowne is put up 15 years, and the fly-leaf of the Additional 10,340 up 10 or 15 years; while Additional 10,340 (text, in a hand like many Wycliffe MSS., as Mr Bond says) is put down 30 years, and Hengwrt down 20. But an amateur's opinion can't stand against those of traind officials, with Charters beside them. The Museum *Boethius* MS., Additional 10,340, is thus degraded from its pride of place,—heretofore assignd to it by more or less knowing friends, and myself,—as the oldest Chaucer MS. known, and its post is taken by the fine Harleian 7334 MS. of the *Canterbury Tales*, which we've all along held to be of 1400 A. D., or very soon after. This MS. was first brought into notice by Mr Thomas Wright, and edited by him for the Percy Society. He reprinted it in a cheap double-column edition. Mr Jephson re-edited it for Robert Bell's Series of Poets (J. W. Parker, now G. Bell and Sons); and Dr Richard Morris re-edited it for the Aldine edition of the Poets (G. Bell and Sons). But older tho' Harl. 7344 is than the other MSS., its provincial forms in *-ud*, &c., and its being of another type than the A or Ellesmere one, render it a less valuable MS. as a basis for a text than the best of the A-type set.

On some of the peculiarities of the Hengwrt, Corpus, and Lansdowne MSS. I have remarkt in my *Temporary Preface* to the Six-Text.

The Sloane 851 is a MS. in two hands, and Sir Frederic Madden told me that he thought the old hand, a page of which is autotyped in the present issue, was the oldest writing of the Canterbury Tales in the Museum; its vellum too is smooth, and not like the later rough stuff; but the text on it is not very good.

The Boethius Additional 10,340 was edited by my friend Dr Richard Morris for the Early English Text Society's Extra Series in 1868, as the friends I then consulted, and I, thought the MS. was possibly before 1400, certainly not later,—and I confess to giving-up that opinion now, only on compulsion. The grammatical forms of the MS. were *theoretically* bad, no end of final *e*'s being left out. This grievd Dr Morris's soul, and he restord the missing finals from the theoretically correcter MS. Cambridge Ii. 3. 21. (of which a page is given in autotype herewith), which Mr Bradshaw (who agreed with us as to the age of the Additional 10,340) had reported as wonderfully correct in its grammatical forms. The Cambridge MS. is a very handsome one, with the Latin text at the side of the English, and I hope its guardian (Mr Bradshaw) will edit it for the Chaucer Society.

On a fly-leaf of the Additional MS. 10,340 is a transcript of Chaucer's touching Balade of *Truth*, or 'Fle fro the pres.' It contains the only-known copy of the Envoy to the poem, and is thus one of the greatest Chaucer treasures in Great Britain. We have some five-and-twenty other copies of the poem as a Tern—that is, 3 stanzas without an Envoy—and not a Balade; and I have often wonderd whether the difficulty of understanding *vache* in the first line of that Envoy led to the stanza being suppresst. (I suppose this *vache* is 'cow', with reference to the 'beste, out of þi stal' four lines above it.)

Royal 18 C II., Harleian 1758, and the paper Christ Church (*A*-type), and Additional 5140, have each had a page autotyped because they have been used to fill up gaps in the Six-Text. Had I known earlier about the types of the MSS., and that the Christ Church was *A*, I should of course have used it to fill up the gaps in the Cambridge Gg. 4. 27, which is A-type too. Now the *A* Cambridge gaps are filld up from *B* (or sometimes possibly *C*) MSS.

Shirley's paper Additional MS. 16,165, has a page taken, for the old man's sake. He lovd Chaucer, Gower, Hoccleve, Lydgate, and copied them with his own hand.[3] And no Chaucer-lover can look with aught but thankfulness and affection on the old man's writing in this and his other MSS. that survive to us. He is our great authority for the Minor Poems of Chaucer and their authorship; and I shall have at least a page from his other two MSS., Ashmole 59 in the Bodleian, and R. 3. 20, in Trinity Coll., Cambridge—the only complete ones in England[4]—autotyped. Though his *eo* for *e*, and his touching-up Chaucer by words of his own occasionally, are nuisances, yet old Shirley is a Chaucer-worthy to be honourd. He was one of the benefactors to the parish-church of St Bartholomew's, West Smithfield, London, and Stowe says of him and his tomb there :—

"John Shirley, esquire, and Margaret his wife, having their pictures of brass, in the habit of pilgrims, on a fair flat stone, with an epitaph thus :—

'Beholde how ended is our poore pilgrimage,
Of John Shirley, esquier, with Margaret his wife,
That xii. children had together in marriage,
Eight sonnes and foure daughters withouten strife,
That in honor, nurtur, and labour, flowed in fame,
His pen reporteth his lives occupation,
Since Pier his life time, John Shirley by name,
Of his degree, that was in Brutes Albion,
That in the yeare of grace deceased from hen,
Foureteene hundred winter, and sixe and fiftie,
In the yeare of his age fourscore and ten,
Of October moneth, the day one and twenty.'

"This gentleman, a great traveller in divers countries, amongst other his labours, painfully collected the works of Geffrey Chaucer, John Lidgate, and other learned writers, which works he wrote in sundry volumes to remain for posterity. I have seen them, and partly do possess them."—1598. Stowe's *Survey of London*, p. 139-40, ed. Thoms, 1842.

The Manuscripts are vellum ones, when not described as being of paper. I haven't thought it worth while to print in type on a separate sheet the extracts on the autotypes, because any one, by turning to the proper places in his printed Chaucer, will be able to read the MSS. with very little trouble. The sheets are not numberd, because, when all the autotypes are issued that the Society can afford, I propose to put forth a list in chronological order, in which the autotypes can be bound.

The formal descriptions of all the Chaucer Manuscripts will, I hope, be given hereafter by Mr Henry Bradshaw. They are all in his Note-Books, and can be put into type whenever he will trust the latter to the printer.

March 16, 1877. F. J. FURNIVALL.

LIST OF AUTOTYPES IN PART I.

Harleian MS. 7334 (British Museum), first page : the *Prologue*. MS. A. D. 1400-25.
Harleian MS. 7334, leaf 103, front : *Wife-Friar Link* and bit of *Friar's Tale*. MS. A. D. 1400-25.
Lansdowne MS. 851 (British Museum), first page : the *Prologue*. MS. A. D. 1400-25.
Lansdowne MS. 851, leaf 207, back : *Monk's Tale* (Lucifer, Adam, Samson). MS. A. D. 1400-25.
Corpus Christi Coll. (Oxford) MS. 198, F. 3. 2, leaf 12, back : end of General *Prologue :* start of *Knight's Tale*. MS. A. D. 1400-35.
Sloane MS. 1685, leaf 178 (British Museum) : *Spurious Canon's-Yeoman-Doctor Link*. MS. A. D. 1400-35.
Additional 10,340 (British Museum), leaf 8, back : *Boethius :* end of Book 1, start of Book 2. MS. A. D. 1400-35.
Cambridge Univ. Library, Ii. 3. 21. *Boethius :* end of Book 2, start of Book 3. MS. A. D. 1400-35.
Additional 10,340 (British Museum), fly-leaf : *Truth*, with unique Envoy : *Prologue*, Parson. MS. A. D. 1400-35.
Royal 18 C II. (British Museum), leaf 82, back : *Man-of-Law-Shipman Link*, as *Man-of-Law-Squire Link*. MS. about 1450 A. D.
Hengwrt MS. 154 (Mr Wynne's), leaf 204 : *Shipman's Tale*, beginning. MS. about 1450 A. D.
Harleian MS. 1758 (British Museum), leaf 97, back : *Friar-Sumner Link; Wife's Tale* (misplaced). MS. about 1450 A. D.
Shirley's autograph MS. Additional 16,165 (British Museum), leaf 241, back : *Anelyda*. MS. about 1450 A. D.
Harleian MS. 7333 (British Museum : from Shirley), leaf 37 (reduced) : *Prologue*. MS. about 1450 A. D.
Christ Church MS. 152 (Oxford), leaf 42 : *Miller's Tale*. MS. about 1435-65.
Additional MS. 5140 (British Museum), leaf 94, back : *Wife's Preamble*, Group D, § 1, l. 367-394. (Six-Text, p. 344-5.) MS. about 1475-1500.

[1] The Syndics of the Cambridge Library have just (March 22, 1877) been good enough to let me have-out their choice MS. for three months, on a Bond for £500 to secure its safe keeping and return.

[2] Other Museum MSS. not yet photographt. Additional MS. 25,718 (bits only), first quarter of the 15th century; Harleian 1239, second third of the 15th century.

[3] He wrote some poems himself too.

[4] A Lydgate MS. of his was sold to the United States some years ago for £120, as no one here 'ud give that for it, I've been told.

of vile happes auenterouses. but to ye reson of
good ¶ And per fore ouste ye nopinge ffor of vis
litel spark· yme heep of lyf schal shine ¶ But
for as muche as it is not tyme zitte of fulpere
remedies ¶ And ye nature of poyntes dulleneth
us pis pat as ofte as pei casten a weye sope opi
mons· pei cloyen hem in tails aymous· pe derk
nesse of perturbacion wheper vp· pat confoundep
pe verray myzt· ffat derknes schal· ·i· say
somwhat to maken yme ffor wheyle by hyzt ffor me
nepche remedies· so pat after pat pe derknes
of desseynynge debrynges is don awey· pou
most knowe pe schynynge of verray hyzt·

Subiz atus comita·

Ffor pertes coueb why blak clowdes ne mok
en geten a don no hyzt· zif pe trouble why
de pat hyzt sulfer stormynge ffal whyz
pe see medlep pe heete pat is to seyne pe
wynynge vp from pe botme ¶ pe walwes p
sometyme weren clere as glas ffyke to pe
fair beyzt dayes wynstaunte anon pe hyztes of
men· by pe fikye ffordome pat is resolued· ffor
pe fletynge ffreme pat roylep don dyuerseply
fro hepze mountaynes is strekid ffor rebuked ofte
tyme by pe encountrynge of a stoon p is dep
tid ffor fallen from some roche ¶ And forpi pis
pou wilt loken ffor demen sope why clere hyzt·
ffor holde pe weye why a wyzt passe ¶ keyne pou
none· out fro pe dreed· fleme pou hope· ne lat
no sorwe apche· pat is to seyn· lat noon of pise
four passions ouer come pe· or blynde pe· for
cloudy ffor durke is pilk wyzt ffor bernde ffor bridles
where as pise pinges regnen·

Explicit liber primus·

Incipit liber secundus·
Postea wher cantacum·

After pis she seynte a litel· and after
pat she hadde gadred by atempre
stillenesse myn attencion she seide
pus· ¶ Who so myzt seye pus·
after pise pinges she seynt a litel ffwhanne
she apesed by atempre stillenesse pat ·i· was
entendif to herkene hire· she bigan to speke
in pis wyse· ¶ pif ·i· se pe haue understonde
ffknowe vtterly pe cheses ffe pe habit of pi ma
ladie· pou langwisshest ffart defeted for talent
ffdesyr of pi rayer fortune ¶ pe pat wile
fortune only pat is chaunged as pou semest
to ye ward· hape puerted pe clerenesse ffye
astat of pi corage· ¶ ·i· understonde pe felefolde
colo ffdecrites of pilke merueillous monstre
fortune· and holde she vsep ful flatrynge fam
larite why hem pat she enforcep to bygyle·
so longe til pat she confonde why vnsufferta
ble sorwe hem pat she hape left in despeir vn
purueyed ¶ And if pou remembrest wel pe
kynde pe maneres ffe pe desert of pilke fortune·
pou shalt wel knowe as myn hir pou neuer
ne haddest ne hast ylost my fair pinges But
as ·i· trowe ·i· shal not stretly trauaile to don
pe remembren of pise pinges ¶ ffor pou
were wont to hantelen hir why manly wor
des whan she was blaundisshinge ffpresente
ffpleasedest hir why sentences pat were drawe
oute of myne entre· pat is to seyne out of
myn informacion ¶ But no sikenesse muta
cion ne bytidep nat why oune maneres chau
ngynge of corages· and so is it bifallen pat
pou art depted a litel fro pe pees of pi poyn
but nou is tyme pat pou drynke ffa litel
some softe ffdelitable pinges· so pat whan
pei ben tempred why me pe· it mowe make
wexe to strenger drynkes of medycynes·
¶ Come nowe forpe pertone pe fusion of liber
nesse rethoryen whyche pat hope oonly pe
wyzt wey whyl she forsakep not myne estu
tutz ¶ And why rethorice come forpe nu
fice a damoisel of oure house pat hyngep
nowe hyzter moedes or placebis nowe heyzer.

CHAUCER'S BOETHIUS, END OF Bk I, START OF Bk II.

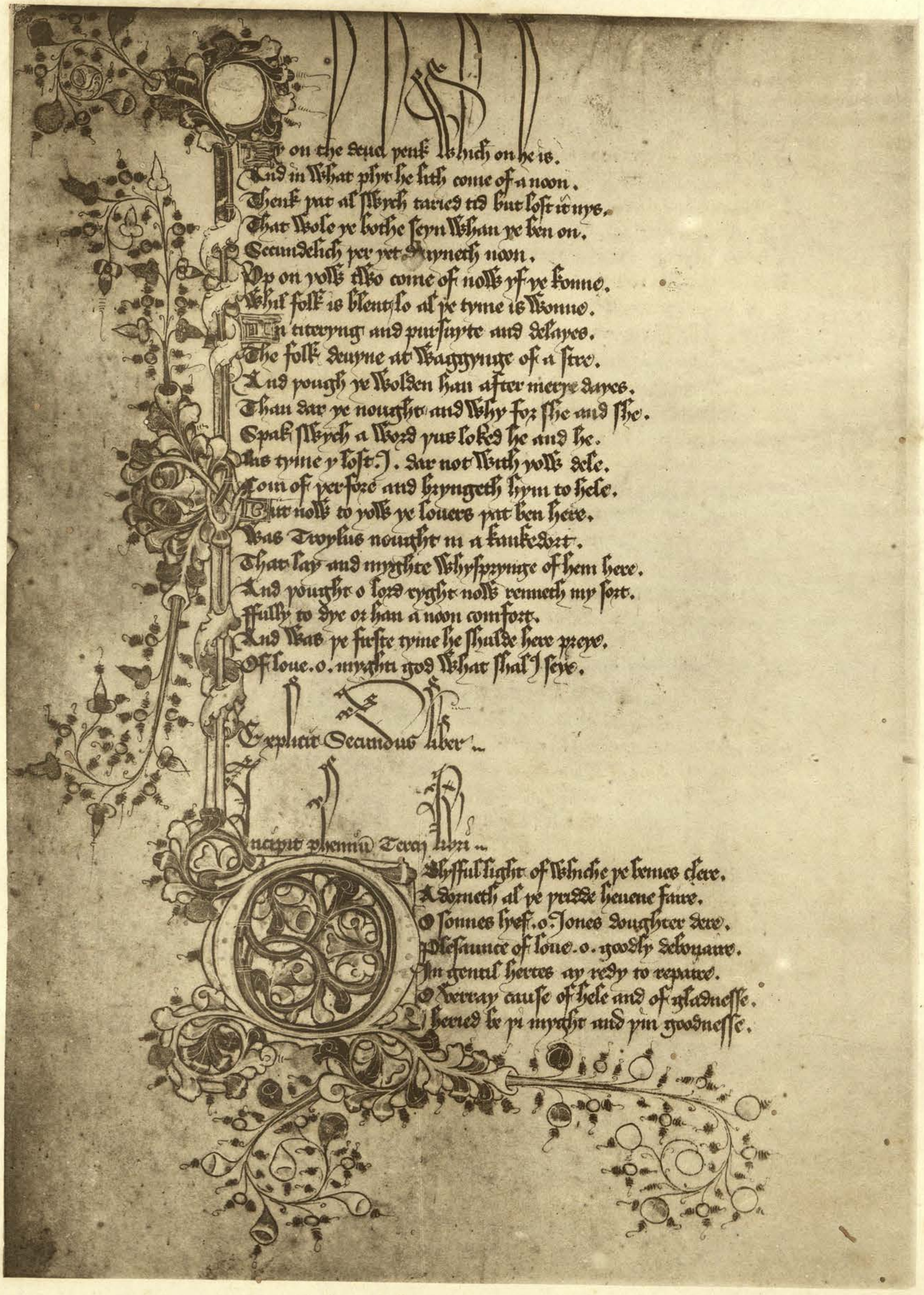
BRITISH MUSEUM, ADDITIONAL MS. 10,340, LEAF 8, BACK; FIRST THIRD OF THE 15TH CENTURY.

The double sorwe of Troylus to tellen.
That was kyng Priamus sone of Troye.
In lovynge how his aventures fellen.
Fro wele to wo and after out of Joye.
My purpos is er that I pleye.
Thesiphone wolde helpe me for to endite.
These woful vers. that wepen as I write.
To the clepe I wolde goddesse of torment.
Thou cruel furie sorwynge evere yn peyne.
Help me that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers as I kan to pleyne.
For wel sit it the sothe for to seyne.
A woful wight to have a wery feere.
And to a sorwful tale a sory cheere.
For I parti of loves servauntz serve.
Wel aught to love for myn unlikhynesse.
Preyen for sped al thogh I nevere sterve.
So fer am I fro his help in derkenesse.
But natheles if yet may yen gladnesse.
Yn to myn lovere and his cause availe.
Have he my payn and myn he him travayle.
For ye lovers parti lyken in gladnesse.
If ony juge of pite in wolde be.
Remembre wolde on passed heynesse
That ye han felt. and on yet adversite.
Of other folk. and redeth hold that ye
Han felt that love hirt wolde dissese.
Or ye han wonne hym with to grete an ese.
And preyeth for hem that ben yn the cas.
Of Troylus. as ye may after here.
That love hym bringe yn heavene to solas.
And eek for me preyeth to god so dere.
That I have myght to shewe in som manere.
Swich peyne and wo. as loves folk endure.
In Troylus unsely aventure.

CHAUCER'S TROILUS.

BOOK I. PROEM.

CAMPSALL M.S.—HENRY V's, WHEN PRINCE OF WALES (KING, 1413, A.D.)—LEAF 1.



CHAUCER'S TROILUS.

BOOK II. END: BOOK III. PROEM.

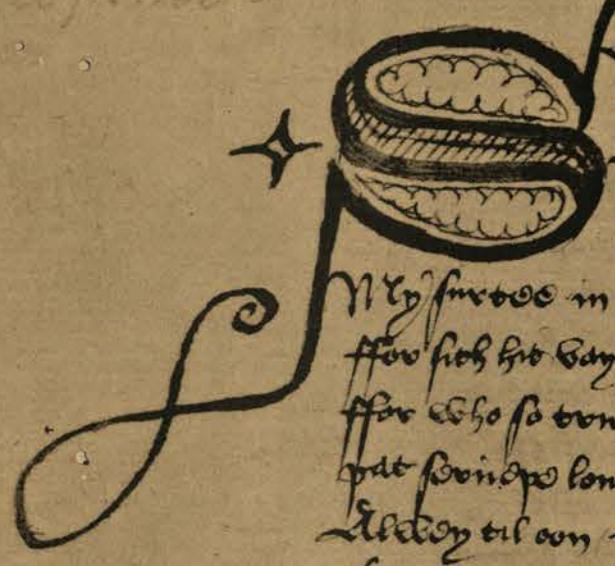
CAMPSALL M.S.—HENRY V's, WHEN PRINCE OF WALES (KING, 1413, A.D.)—LEAF 42, BACK.

Ye pe complaynte

Kyndenes of mercy I. yow preye
Whom pat I. hyght ou deye
pis is al and some my lady deere
And I yowre man fromo yow to yeere

Here endpe pe Dreme and pe complaynt of pe Dysyous
seruant vnlous and filozyng berynnepe pe complaynt
of Anelyda. pe fayre Arcyte of Thartage. Upon. pe
Chiualrous Lycoyte of pe royal blode of Thebes deseend.

Ptolemy fol. 256 b.



I. thrillepe with pe poynt of Pomembraunce
pe sebord of sweete whose breth. hale plesaunce
Myn hert bare of blysse and blad of knelle
pat twened is in ebbyng alwy daunce
Myn swete in chaped countenaunce
ffor sich his bayleps mayght for to be trauelle
ffor whose trouthest is his shal hir trauelle
pat seruepe long and dupe him obseruaunce
Alday til on and chaungepe fro pe pleasaunce
I bet my self als wel as any wight
ffor longed don with al myn hert and mayght
Alwe pane my self an hundrepe thousandfype
And called I myn hertes lyfe my knyght
With chas a lyf for as hit was ryght
Whan he was gone pane was I sure blythe
And his desese eche day dupe aswype
And he agen his trouthe hape me plyght
ffor euer more his lady true to lyue

CHAUCER'S ANELYDA. SHIRLEY'S AUTOGRAPH PAPER MS.

ADDITIONAL 16,165, (BRIT. MUS.) LEAF 241, BACK. Ab. 1450 A.D.

(JOHN SHIRLEY DIED ON OCTR 21, 1456 AGED 90, STOWE.)

Dictat una sodalitas

O felix hominū genus
Si nōs amnos amor
Quo celū regit regat.

Hat p̄ wordis wt stable ferth / vayeth a
tordable chaungynges / / pt the contra
yos qualite of elementz holden among
hem self a liante pdurable / pt pro
the sonne wt his goldene chayet / bryngeth forth
the joesens day / pt the mone hath cōmaundement
ouer the nightes / / whiche nightes he fulfylleth the ende
steppe hat bowt / / pt pō se gyesy to flowen con
seyueth wt a certayn ende his floodes / so pt it
is nat lueful to stretchen his bowe temes or bowen
des vp on the eythes / / pt is to seyn to cowde alle
the eythe / Al this a cordaunce of thinges is bown
den wt loue / pt gouerneth eythe & see / & hath also
cōmaundementz to the henones / & yif this loue
slakede the bridelis / alle thinges pt now lonen
hem to gederes / wolden maken a batayle to warly
mely & feyhten to fordoon the fasoun of this
worlde / the which they now leden in acordable
feith by fayre meetynges / / this loue hath
to gideres peoples ioygned wt an holy bond / &
knytteth sacrement of mariages of chaste loues
and loue enditeth lawes to trewe felawes / O
weleful weery mankynde / yif thilke loue pt
gouerneth henone gouernes your werages /

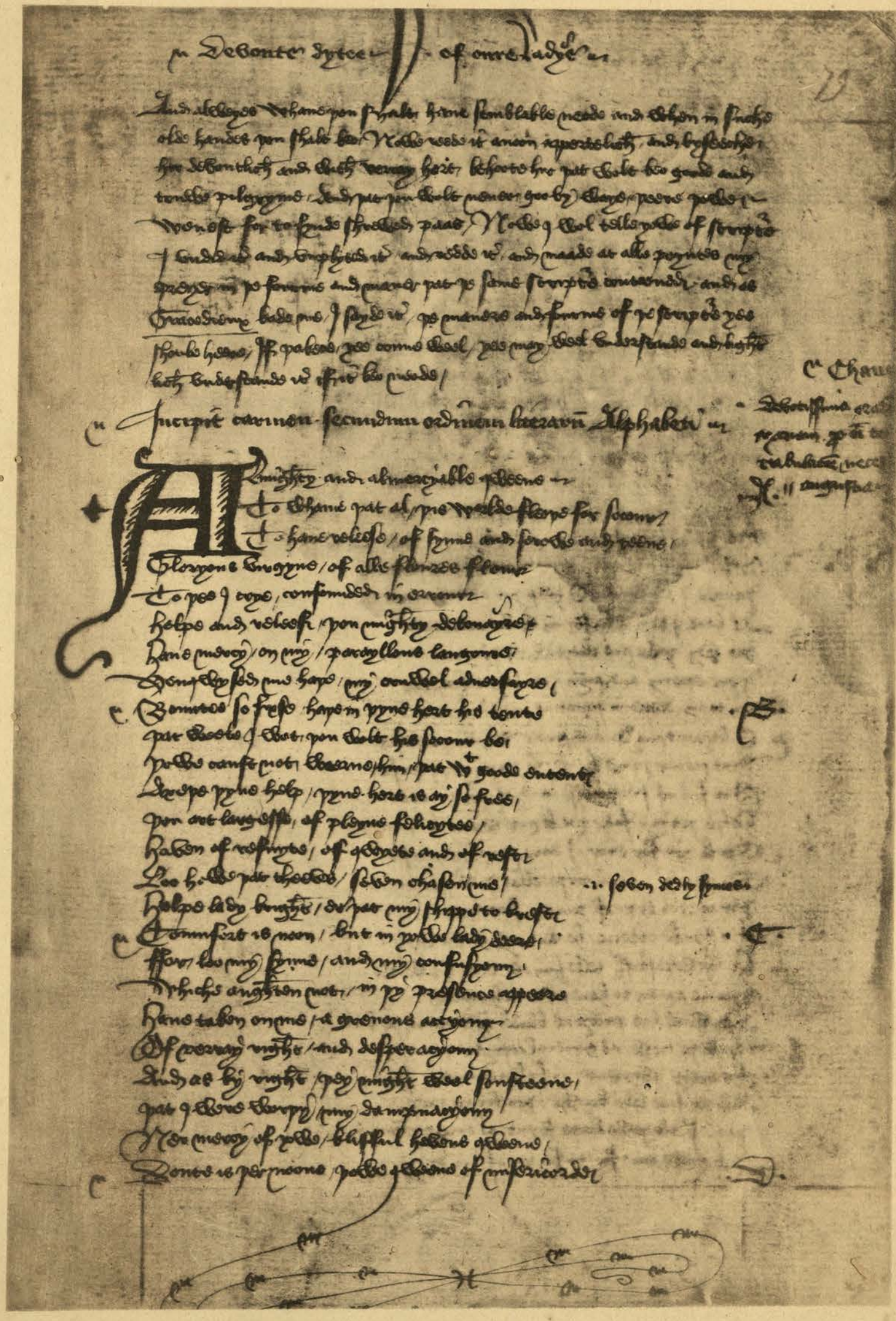
Explicat lib 2m
Incipit lib 3m

Am cantu illa finierat cū me
audiendi auidū stupentem si
ereas auribus ad huc. carminis mulce
do detinebat. Itaq; paulo p. O mihi

Prosa i.

CHAUCER'S BOETHIUS.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, M.S, Ii. 3. 21. ABOUT 1420-30, A.D.



CHAUCER'S ABC,

FROM SHIRLEY'S MS OF THE PROSE ENGLISHING OF G. DE DEGUILEVILLE'S.

PÈLERINAGE DE LA VIE HUMAINE, "THE LYF OF MAN."

SION COLLEGE PAPER MS, ARCHIVES 2. 23, ABOUT 1440 A.D.

Fle hope pres & dradle vnp sopefastnesse
Quisse pin olden prince pei it be smal.
ffor fode hape hate & chymbing tykelnesse
Dede hape onlize & vlyke blome onal.
Sanonye no more panne pe by hono schal
Ponle vbod pi self pat ony folk canst paude
And tyme schal dehyne it is no drede
Dompaste pe nonzt al gode to possesse
In trust of hise pat comep as a bal
Dyche dede stanes in hital bestynesse.
Bysliop perfore to stunpe azeynes an al.
Stynne not as dope pe gode vnp pe bal
Unite pi self pat dauntest operes dede
And tyme schal dehyne it is no drede
And tyme schal dehyne it is no drede
pat pe is sent pcapne in bysshinesse
pe vhystlynge for pe vorlde ayep a bal
hape is non home hep mys hire vhyldernesse
ffope tyllynge forpe forpe lefte one of pi stal
Pnolbe pi corne loke up ponk god of al
Holde pe hape vhape & hat pi self pe lode
And tyme schal dehyne it is no drede

Robert

pep fore pon vache lorde pine alde vhyckednesse
Unto pe virid lore nolde to be pat
Epe thyng nedep. pat of hise hie godnesse
Made pe of nonzt & in especial
Calle vnto hym & pray in generyal
ffor pe & eke for oper heuenelyche mede
And tyme schal dehyne it is no drede

Seruys seruo in ib pch to the
hise the yo. humble
ff ff grim

pep vas a pore pson of a tonne
And vas a gode man of ponesse
holy he vas ipe in ponyt & vepte
pe it he vas aleped man a clepte
Vlyde hys dysshe honsed nauep he fep a sondep
he lefte nouzt for poynes no for pondep
pe folgede in hys stryche pe vrisse
he coupe hauo sufficiaunce in pnyst fnl lisse
ffnl lope vas hym to enplen for hys tynes
And so he vas pmoned after sypes
pns vistde he vallke & in hys hand a staf
pis noble ensample vn to hys shepe he zaf
pat fyrst he vrozt & afterward he tauzte
Out of pe gospel he pe vordes saupte
he lefte nauzt hys benefice to hyre
And lefte hys shepe enclosed in pe myre
he ran to londen vnto seynte poules
To seche hym a chaunterye for soules
Opep vhy aliepnyhede to be vhyp holde
Out vnder at home the hepe hys alde folde
He pat pe vicke no malo vn nat vnskapy
he vas a shepherde & nat a mercenapy
And pis fygure he addede eke pe to
Out if gold rust vhat shal yren do
ffor zif a preste be foule on vhom we trust
he vonder is a vlaked man to rust
And shame it is if a preste take keepe
A shiten shepherde & a clene shepe
he vayted after no pompe no pryde
he made hym a spiced conscience
But cristes lore & his apostles alpe
he taught but first he folfilled it hym selue.
Remembre me pat speke schalle dyne
In pacyence & mekenesse hys empyse
In pyttes speke hym gyde hym & amende

LEFT COLUMN.

CHAUCER'S "TRUTH." WITH UNIQUE ENVOY.

RIGHT COLUMN.

PARSON IN PROLOGUE.

BRITISH MUSEUM, ADDITIONAL MS, 10,340, FLY LEAF, FIRST THIRD OF 15TH CENTURY.

Whan pat aprill with his schoures sote
pe droughte of marche hath pced to pe roote
And bathed euery veyne in swiche licour
Of whiche vertue engendred is pe flour
Whan zephirus eke wt his swete breepe
Inspired hath in euy holte & heethe
The tendre croppes & pe zonge sonne
Hath in pe ram his halfe cours ironne
And smale foules maken melodye
pat slepen al nyght with open yhe

So priketh hem nature in hir corages
Thanne longen folke to goone on pilgrimages
And palmeres for to seeke straunge strondes
To ferne halowes kowpe in sundry londes
And specially from euy shyres ende
Of engelond to canterbury pey wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan pat were seke

Bifel pat in pat seson on a day
In southwerke at pe tabard as I lay
Redi to wenden on my pilgrimage
To canterbury with ful deuout corage
At nyght was come into pat hostelrie
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sondry folke by auenture yfalle
In felawshipe & pilgrimes were they alle
That toward canterbury wolde ride
The chambres & stables weren wyde
And wel we weren esed at pe beste
And shortly whan pe sonne was to reste
So hadde I spoken wt hem euychone
That I was of hir felawshipe anone
And made forward erly for to rise
To take our way ther as I yow deuise
But nathelees while I haue time & space
Er that I further in this tale pace
Me thinketh it accordaunt to resone
To telle yow al pe condicioune
Of ech of hem so as it semed me
And which they were & of what degree
And eke in what array that they were inne
And at a knyghte than wol I first biginne

BRITISH MUSEUM

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. PROLOGUE.

LANSDOWNE MS. 851 (BRITISH MUSEUM.) LEAF 1, A.D. 1400-1425.

Yeoman

Ye in booke it wryte in no maniere
ffor vnto cryst it ys so leef and dere
That he wylle not yat it distorcyed be
But where hit lyketh to hys deitee
man to enspyre and eke for to defende
Wyan yat hym lyketh loo pis ys ye ende
Whan conclude I pus fynyng yat god of heuen
He wolle not yat ye philosofres nemen
Noon yat a man shalle come vnto pis stoon
Trede as for ye beste let it goone
ffor who so maketh god hys aduersarye
As for to worche ony venge in contrarye
Vnto hys wille certes neuere shalle he thryfe
Wonze yat he multeplye terme of hys lyfe
And pere a poynte for endid ys my tale
God sende euery trewe man bote of hys bale
Here endeth ye tale of ye Chanon yeman
Here begynneth ye prologge of ye Doctor of physike
Whan yat pis yeman his tale ended hade
Of pis false chanon whiche yat was so badde
Oure Oste gan say truly and certayne
Thys preest was begyled sothely for to sayne
He weenynge for to be a philosofre
Tylle he nist no golde leste in hys coffre
And soyely ms preest hade a liyer jape
Thys cursid chanon put in hys heed an ape
But al pis passe I euere as noobe
Sire Doctour of physyke I pray zou
Telle vs a tale of some honeste matere
Hit shal be done yf yat ze wille it here
Sayde pis Doctour and hys tale he gan anone
Now gode men pis he herkeneth enereche on
Here endeth ye Prologge and begynneth ye tale
Here was as telleth me Titus lyuius
A knyzt yat clepid was Virginius
Fulffylld of honoures and of worynesse

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. END OF CANON'S-YEOMAN TALE, SPURIOUS CANON'S-YEOMAN-DOCTOR-LINK.

SLOANE MS, 1685, (BRITISH MUSEUM.) LEAF 178. FIRST THIRD OF 15TH CENTURY.

The Squyer

Til dethe depte hem thus lyst thes lede
And sayeth nowt wol my tale is at an ende
Now god yif hym that of his mygte may sende
Joye after wo gouerne vs in his grace
And kepe vs alle that bon in this place

Explicat legat pro fabula

The prolog of the squyers tale

Whe ost up on his stroppes stood anon
And saide godemen herkeneth eudelon
This was a thrifty tale for pe nones
Hye passithe pleese yf ho for goddes bones
Telle vs a tale as was thi forward yore
I se wel that ye lerneden mon in lore
Can mochel good by goddes dignete
The prest him answerde benedicite
What eyleth the man so synfully to swere
Oure ost answerde O lanekyn be ye there
I smelle a lolleye in the wynde yf ho
Holt goodmon yf ye lyketh me
I bidde for goddes digne passioun
For we shal haue a predicacioun
This lolleye herde wel pechon de sone what
Nay by my fadey quod he that shal he nat
Seide pe squyer her shal he nat preche
He shal no gospel glosen here no teche
We leuen alle in the grete god ho
He wolde sowen som difficulte
Or springen cokkel in oure clene corn
And therfore hoost y warne pe byforn
My ful wel shal a tale telle
And I shal clynken yow so merry a belle
That I shal waken al this compaignye
But it shal not ben of philosophye
Ne phisyas ne termes quevnte of latte
Ther is but litel latyn in my matte
Here endyth the prolog // And begynneth the tale.

Ther was in the lond of tartayre
Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed russye
Thorugh which ther deyed many a doughty man
This noble kyng was cleped cambyuskan
Which in his tyme was of so grete renon
That ther nas noon hym in no region

Ꝑ tria monet² terra ⁊ ḡitum q̄
non potest sustinere ⁊ cū rec⁹-
uaūt ⁊ stultum cū sapiente
fuit cūbe ⁊ adiūm mulierem
cū in matrimonio fuit assūpta
⁊ ancillam cū fuit heres nū
fuit ꝓbot Salamons. /

Tria sunt insatiabilia ⁊ q̄tū
ꝑ nōdū dic⁹ sufficiet Infernus.
⁊ oū virtus vultus ⁊ terra que
nō saciat² aqua / Ignis Ꝑ. nōdū
dicit sufficit ꝓbot Salamons.

I rekned is for oon of thes mysthammes
2ben ther noon othir maner resemblaunces
That ye made lyke / youz parables too
2But ye of a sely wyf be oon of tho
Thou likenest eek / Womman is lyke to helle
To barevid lond / ther Water may nat dwelle
Thou lyknest it also / to Wylde fyre
The mod it brennyth / the mod it hateth dest
To consume eldy thynst / that brent Wolde be
Tho seist that right as Wormys shende a tre
Right so a wyf / distroieth hir housbond
This klowen they / that ben to Wyves bond
Ordynaūce right thus as ye have vndirstond
2But ser stryfly / myn olde housbondis answerd
That thus thei seyden in her dronkencsse
And al Wyves-fals but that y toke Wytnesse
Of Jankyn / and of my nece also
O lord the peyne / I dede hem and the Wo
fful grylliche / bi-gadir3 stvete pyne
ffor at an hors / I cowde byte and Whyne
I cowde playne / Wham y Wole in the gylt
Or elles of thy tyme / I hadde ben spylt
Who so that first to myle cometh / first grynt
I pleyned first / so Was our Werre stynt
They Wed ful sikkir / repentir hem ful bytr
Of thyng the Whiche / they nevir agylt her lyve
Of Wenchis / Wolde y bed hem an hond
Wham that for sykenesse they myght vnethe stond

Ye wot youy forward and I it you recorde
If euynsong and morwesong accorde
Let see now who shal telle po fyrste tale
As euery mote I drynke wyn of ale
Who so be rebel to my Iuggement
Shal paie for all pat by po wayes is spent
Now draweb cut ar pat wo fellow tobynne
He which pat hab po shortest shal bigynne
Sir knight qd he my maistey and my lord
Now draweb cut for pat is myn accord
Comeb nerre quod he my ladyi prioresse
And ye sir clerk let be youy shamfastnesse
Ne studieb nought lay hond to euy man
Anon to drawe euery wight bygan
And shortly for to tellen as it was
Were it by auentuye or sort or cas
The sop is fyn pe cut fel to po knight
Of which ful blipe and glad was euery wight
And telle he moste his tale as it was resonn
By forward and by composicion
As ye han herd what nedep wordes mo
And when pis good man saugh pat it was so
As he pat wyse was and obedient
To keepe his forward by his free assent
He seide sipne I shal begynne po game
What welcome be po cutte a goddes name
Now let vs ride and herkneb what I seye
And with pat word we riden forp oure weye
And he bigan with right a merye cheere
His tale anon and seyde as ye may heere
Iam cū domos patrias sitice post aspera gentis
prelia lauigo ad

Whilom was as olde stories tellen vs
Ther was a duk pat highte Theseus
Of Athenes he was lord and gouernour
And in his tyme such a conqueroun

The prologe of the knyghtes tale

¶ O. yee so noble and worthi prynces and · princesse
ever · of rutus or degrees · what ever yee bee yt haue
dispocioone or plesaunce · to rede or here ye storues
of olde tymes passed to kepe yolv fromē ydelnesse
and slowthe · me eschewinge ever folies yat myght
be cause of more harome filowyng · Wherefore fauf
I be redie yolve · to fynde yolve occupacon in ye redyng
here of ye tales · of Cauntirburie wiche been ·
compiled in yis boke filowyng ffurst formoid · yma
gend and made kepe for disporte and leeringe
of alle yow that been gentile of birthe or of vertues
by ye lanveal and moste famous poete yat ever ·
Was to fore hym as in pendelisshinge of owre vnde
moders englisshe tonge · depid Chaucyer a Gaufride
of whos soule god for his mercy haue pitee of his
grace Amen ·

¶ Nowe here furste begynnyth ye prologe of ye
kneytes tale ·

Hamie yt Aperyll wt his shoures swote
ye Drowght of marche hath pered to yt rote
And bathed ech veyne · in swiche lykoure
Of wiche vertue · engendred is ye flour
Whanne zephirus eke · wt his swete breethe
Enspirid hath in ech holt and hethe
The tendre croppis · And ye yonge sonne
Hath in ye Ram · his halfe cours ironne
And smale foules · maken melodye
yat slepen al ye nyght wt open eye
So pricketh hem nature in hir corages
Thanne longen folke to goon on pilgrymages
And palmeres eke · to seche straunge strandes
To ferne halowes · couthe in sundrie landes
And specially · from ech shires ende
Of Engleland to Cauntirbury they wende
The holy blisful martir · for to seke
yat hem hath holpen whanne yt they were seke ·
Bifelle yt in yt seyson on a day
In Southwerke at ye tabard as I laye
Redy to wende · on my pilgrymage
To Cauntirburi with ful devout corage
At nyght was come in to yt hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty on a compaignye
Of sundrie folke · by auenture yfalle
In felaschip and pylgrymes were they alle
That toward Cauntirbury wolden ride
The chambres & ye stables weren wide
And wel we weren eson at ye beste
And shortly whan ye sonne was to reste
So had I spoken w̄ hem everichoon
That I was of hir felaschipe anoon
And made forwarde erly for to ryse
To take our weye · ther as I yow devyse
But nathelesse · whyle I haue tyme & space
Or yt I forther · in yis tale passe
Me thynketh it · acordaunt to reyson
To tellen yow · al ye condicion
Of · eche of hem · so as it semed me
And whiche they were · and of what degree
And eke in what araye that they were in
And at a knyght · I wol first bigynne

¶ A knyght ther was · and yt a worthy man — ¶ A kneyght

That fro ye tyme · that he first began
To ryden out · he loved chivalrye
Trouthe and honour · fredam & curteisie
Ful worthy was he · in his lordes werre
And therto had he ridden · no man ferre
As well in cristendam · as hethenesse
And ever honoured · for his worthinesse
At Alisaundre he was · whanne it was wonne
Ful ofte tyme · he had ye bord bigonne
Aboven alle yt nacions · in prusse
In lettowe had he reysed · and in ruce
No cristen man · so ofte of his degree
In Gernade at ye seege · eke had he be
Of Algezir · and ridden in belmarye
At lyeys was he · and at Satalye
Whanne they were wonne · and in ye grete see
At many a noble armee had he be
At mortal batayles · had he be fiftene
And foughten for our feyth at Tramassene
In lystes thries · and ay slayn his foo
This ilke worthy knyght had ben also
Some tyme wt ye lord · of palatye
Ageynst a noble Turk in Turkye
And evermore · he had soverayne prys
And though yt he was worthy he was wys
Of al his port as meke as is a mayde
He never yit no vilanye ne sayde
In all his lyf · vn to no manner wyght
He was a verray parfit gentil knyght
And for to tellen yow of his array
His hors were gode · but he was not gay

ffor sekyrly whan I was borym anon
Deth drow ye tappe of lyf & let it gon
And ever sithe hath so ye tappe ronne
Til pt almost al empty is ye tūne
The strē of lyf now droppith on ye chymbe
The selly tunge may wel iuge & chymbe
Of wrecchednesse pt passed is ful sore
Wt olde folk saue dotage is no more
Whā pt ye ost hadde herd this sarmoūnyng
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng
He seyde what amoūtyth al yis wrt
What schul we speke alday of holy writ
The deuyl made a reue for to preche
And of a soutere schipman or a leche
Sey forth thyn tale & tarye not pt tyme
lo depeforthe & it is half weye prime
lo Grenewych ye manye a shrewe is inne
It were hey tyme pyn tale to begynne
Now serys qd this oswold the reue
I preye zow alle pt ze nat zow greue
Thow I answere & stidel sette hese howe
ffor leeful it is pt forse forse of schowe
This dronkeue melleere hath I told zow here
how pt begiled was a carpentere
parauenture in storn for I am on
And by zōe leue I schal zow quyte a non
Ryght in hese cherlis termys wele I speke
I preye to god his nekke mote breke
He can wel in myn eye sen a strawe
But in hese owene he can not sen a bawe

Here begynnyth the Reue his tale.

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. MILLER-REEVE LINK.

CAMBRIDGE UNIV. LIBRY MS. GG. 4. 27, (A.D. 1430-40) LEAF 186.

self as nygh wroth bi fore god of heuene/ Anothir
is whā he dispiseth non othir man/ The thredde is
whan he ne rekke nat thow men holde hȳ not
worth/ the ferthe is whā he ne is not soty of his
his humyliacioū/ Also the humylite of mouth: is ī
my· thȳgis/ m a tempre speche and m humylite of
speche/ And whan he knowith verth his owene mo
uth that he is swich as he thynketh that he is/ m his
herte/ Anothir is whā he preyseth the bounte of a
nother man/ and no thyng therof amenuseth/ hmmy
lite ek ñ werk is m· my· manere/ ¶ The fyfte is
whā he puttyth othere men bi foryn hym/ the se
cunde is to chese the lowveste place ovral/ The thred
de is· gladly to assente to good conseyl/ The forte is
to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereynys or
of hȳ that is m heyere degree/· Certeyn this is an
yreet degree oh humylite

Invidia

Charite

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. PARSON'S TALE: END OF PRIDE. ENVY.

CAMBRIDGE UNIV. LIBRY MS. GG. 4. 27, (A.D. 1430-40) LEAF 416.

Here begynnyth the Pardonner his tale

Ye flanderys whilhom dwellede a cumpanye
Of yonge folk that haūtedē folye
As ryot hasard stewes & tauernys
Where as with harpys lutys & geternys
They dañce & pleye at dees bothe day & nyght
And ete & drynke also ouyr here myzt
Thoꝝ whiche they don the deuyl sacrifise
Within that deuyls temple cursede wyse
By superfluyte abhominable
Here othis been so grete & so dampnable
That it is grisely for to here hē swere
Oure blyssede lordis body they to tere
Hem thouzte that Jewis rente hym not ynough
And eche of hem at otherys synne lough
And thāne ryzt a non comyn Tumbesteris
ffetyse & smale & yonge fruytesteris
Syngeris with harpis Baudis wafereris
Whiche been the verray deuyl officeris

attempaūce · that holdith the meene in alle thyngis.
ek shame that eschewith al disoneste. Sufferaūce that
sekith no ryche metis ne drenkys ne doth nofors of to
outrageous apparaylyge of mete · mesure also that res
treynyth by reson the dissame appetit of etynge Sobur
nesse also that restreynyth the outrage of drynk · Sam
tynge also that restreynyth the delicat man as is to
sitte longe at his mete & softely wherfore some folk sho
dyn of here owene vsil to etyn at the lasse leyser.

Et sequitur de peccato Luxurie.

Lecherye

Chastite

Our glotonye corrupth lecherye
for these two synnes been so nygh
cosynys that ofte tyme thei
le not depte god wot. This sy
ne is ful displesaūt thyng to god
for he seyde hym self · Do no leche
rye and therfor he ordeyned grete
peynys agayn this synne in the olde lawe. And if wom
tkat were takyn in this synne she shulde been bery
with stonys to the deth. And zif she were a gentil
woman she shulde be slayn with stonys / and if she be

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. PARSON'S TALE: LECHERY.

CAMBRIDGE UNIV. LIBRY MS. GG. 4. 27, (ab A.D. 1430-40) LEAF 433.

Glotenye

Abstinēce

ffor anarice compth glotenye
vhiche is expres eꝰ a geyns
the comaundement of god glo
tenyee is vnmesurable apetit
to ete or to drynke or elles to ꝺ
ꝓuoke to the on mesurable
ut ꝑ disordeynes coueytyse to
etyn or to drynke Vhis synne corrumpiꝺ al this vorld
als is veel scheveyꝺ in the synne of adam ꝑ of eue
lose eꝰ vhat seyth seynt ꝑoule of glotenye · manye
seyth seynt poule woon of vhiche] haue ofte seyꝺ
to yow ꝑ now] seye it ageyne that been the enmyis
of the croys of crist of vhiche the ende is deth wos
of vhiche here vombe is here god ꝑ here gloyre in
confusiōn of hē that so seruoury erthely thyng he
that is vsaūt to this synne of glotenye he ne may
no synne ewꝫstonde he mot been in seruage of alle
vices for it is the seuuliis hous there he lyth in
and restith this synne hat manye spicis Vhe ferste
is dronkenesse that is the horrible sepulture of mā
nys resoū and therfore vhā a man is dronkyn he

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. PARSON'S TALE: GLUTTONY.

CAMBRIDGE UNIV. LIBRY MS. GG. 4. 27, (A.D. 1430-40) LEAF 432.

The prologe of ye Shipman

Thus drane Gamelyn his lans and his ledo
And dreke hem on his enemyes. & quytte he heymedo
And dyd ote his broper made hem his heyo
And dyden dedes gamelyn a drif good and fayr
They hyned to endere ye dhile pat eft dold.
And dyden dat gamelyn drauen vnder molde
And o dhil dde alle may per no may flo
God bremis vs to par joyo pat euer shal bo
Thus dyuep po prologe of ye shipman
Here endep pe tale of ye Coke. And

The prologe.

Hoo frendes seide our hoost so dere
Hoo like zou by sohn pe pdonep
For he hap vnbokeles del pe male
He hap vs tolde vizt a thrifty tale
As touchinis of my stomermitc
I prey to god zeue hym good chance
As ze han here of pise retones pre
Most eruul ayayne Herteli I preyo po
Telle vs a good tale and pat vizt anon
It shal be done by god & by seint sohn
Seide pis marinep as del as ein can
And vizt anon his tale he bygan.
Thus endep pe prologe of ye shipman
And here bygynnep pe shipmanes tale

Marchaunt dhilom dde dlles in seynt denys
Pe riche das for dhich men held hym dyo
A dif he had of excellent bedde
And compans ble and reuerent das she
dhich is a pinge pat causep more dispence
pan dorp is al pe chere and reuerence
pat men hem done at feestes and at dannces
Such cabitacens and costnimces
Passep as dep po shadodo vpon a dall
But dod is hym pat payen moto for all
The selp husbond algate he mot payo
He moto vs clopo and vs aray

Here begynnyth the manci[illegible] his tale

Hāphebus dwellēde heere ī this erthea doū
As olde bokys maky mēnoū
He was the moste lusti bacheleere
In al this world ek the beste archer
He slow phitoū the serpent as he lay
Slepyng agein the sune vp on a day
And manye a noble worthi dede
He with his bowe broughte as ze may rede
Pleyen he cowde on every menstrelsye
And syngyn that it was a melodye
To heryn of his cleere voys the soun
Certis the kyng of thebes Amphioun
That was his syngyng walleede that cete
Koude neuere sygy half so wel as he
Therto he was the semplyeste man
That is or was sithe that the world be gan
What nedith it his feturis to discryue
For in this world was non so fayr on lyue
He was therwith fulfyld of gentylesse
Of honour & of pfyt worthynesse.

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. MANCIPLE'S TALE.

CAMBRIDGE UNIV. LIBRY MS. GG. 4. 27, (A.D. 1430-40) LEAF 395.

Here be sympth the monk his tale

Wole be wayle in maniere of Tragedie
The harm of hem that stood in hey degre
And fallyn so that theere nas no remedie
To bringe hē out of hire adversitee
For certeyn whan that fortune leste to fle
Theere may no man the cours of hire withholde
Ne not man truste on blynd prosperitee
Be war by these exsaūples trewe & olde -

Lucifer

At lucyfer thow art an aūgel weere
And not a man at hȳ first wese begynne
For thow fortune may noon aūgel deere
Fro high degree yit fel he for his synne
Doūn in to helle where as he yit is inne
O lucifer brynteste of aūgels alle
Now art thow satenas that mayst nat twynne
Out of myserie in which that thow art falle

Adam

Loo adam in the feeld of damassene
With goddys owene fyngyr wroght was hee
And not begetyn of mannys semē ouerne
And whyle al paradys savīge on tree
Hadde neuere worldely man so heigh degree
As adam tyl he for myssgouernaūce
Was dreue out of his hye prosperite
To labour & to helle & to myschaūce

ȝe han ſayd mochel ying right wel I ſay
But dame right as we ryden by ye way
Vs needep nouȝt but for to ſpeke of game
And lete auctorites in goddes name
To preching and to ſcoles of clergie
But if it like to yis companye
I wil zolle of a ſompnour telle a game
Par de ze may wel knolle by ye name
That of a ſompnour may no good be ſayd
I pray zolle pat noon of zolle be euel a payd
A Compnour is a renner vp and doun
Wip maundemetz for fornicacioun
And is y bete at euery tounes eende
Our oſte ſpak a ſir ze ſchold been heende
And curteys as a man of zour eſtaat
In company we wol haue no debaat
Telley zour tale and let ye ſoupno be
Nay quop ye ſompnour let him ſay to me
What ſo him liſt whan it comep to my lot
By god I ſchal him quyten euery grot
I ſchal him telle which a gret honour
Is to ben a fals flatering hymptour
And his offis I ſchal him telle I wis
Oure hoſt anſwerd and ſayd ye ſoupno yis
And after yis he ſayd vnto ye frere
Telley forp zour tale my maiſter deere

Here pe Frere

Whilom per was dwellyng in my contre
An erchedeken a man of gret degre
That boldely did execucion
In punyſchyng of fornicacion
Of wicchecraft and eek of bawderye
Of diffamacioun and auoutrie
Of chirchereues and of testamentes
Of contractes and of lak of ſacramentes
And eek of many anoper cryme
Which needip not to reherſe at pis tyme
Of vſur and of Symony also
But certes lecchours did he gretteſt wo

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. WIFE-FRIAR LINK & FRIAR'S TALE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334, (BRITISH MUSEUM.) LEAF 103; A.D. 1400-1425.

Here bigynneth the Shypmannes tale

Ha̅ yaschaun Kelson / dwelled at Seint Denys
That pese was / for which men helde hym ryys
A ryf he hadde / of excellent beautee
And compaignable / and pleyeldous was ese
Which is a thyng / that causeth moore dispence
Than wyt / is al the cheeye and pleyesence
That men hem don / at festes and at daunces
Wiche salutacions / and contenances
Passen / as doth a shadwe up on the wal
But wo is hym / that payen moot for al
The wyf / housbonde / algate he moot paye
He moot vs clothe / and he moot vs arraye
Al for his owen worshipe / richely
In which arraye / we daunce jolily
And if pt he wolde / mary / pauenture
Or elles / lest no wiche dispense endure
But thynketh / it is wastful and yloste /
Thanne moot another / payen for oure coste /
Or lene vs gold / and that is perilous
This noble ya̅chant / heeld a worthy hous
For which / he hadde alday / so greet repayr
For his largesse / and for his ryf was fayr
That wondeth / but herkneth to my tale
Amonges alle his gestes / yet̄ and smale
Ther was a yonk / a fayr man and a bold
I trowe / a thrifty wyf hadde he old
That euery dai / was dalying / to that place
This yonge yonk / that was so fayr of face
Acqueynted was so / with the goode man
Ever that / his first knedelyng bigan
That in his hous / as familiar was he
As it is possible / any freend to be
And for as muchel / as this goode man
And eek this yonk / of which pt I bigan
Were bothe two yborn / in o village
The yonk hym claymeth / as for cosynage

And emely hym lowely to wedyne
And he hym lowly to gentilesse
That euer thrye he sholde hem wrathen
Of ialousye / or any other thinge
Thus endith palamon and emelye
And god saue alle this faire compaignye

Here endith the knyghtes tale

Here bigynnyth the prologe of the millers tale

Whan that the knyght had thus his tale ytolde
In alle the compaignye / nas there yong ne olde
That he ne sayde / it was a noble storie
And worthy for to drawen to memorie
And namely the gentils everichon
Oure hoost lough / and sware as he were goon
Tho seyde a right / Unbokeled is the male
Let see now who shalle telle another tale
For trewely the game is wele bigonne
Now telleth ye sire monke / if that ye konne
Somwhat to quyte with the knyghtes tale
The millere that for dronken was al pale
So that vnnethes upon his hors he sitte
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hatte
Ne abyden noman for his curtesie
But in pilates voys he gan to crye
And swere by armes / & by blood and bones
I kan a noble tale for the nones
With whiche I wille quyte the knyghtes tale
Oure hoost sawgh that he was dronke of ale
And seyde abyde robyn / leve brother
Som better man / shalle telle vs first another
Abyde and lete vs werken thrifteley
By goddes dignite quod he that clepid is seint
Ne wot I wele what thou mayst mene
Thou art a fole. thy wit is overcome
Now herkeneth quod the millere alle & some

H. 9. 1 Sec 1735

Whan that aprille with his shoures soote
The droughte of marche hath perced to the roote
And bathud euery veyne in swich licour
Of which vertue engendred is the flour
Whan zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Enspirud hath in euery holte and heeth
The tendre croppes and the zonge sonne
Hath in the ram his halfe cours ironne
And smale foules maken melodie
That slepen al the nyght with open yhe
So pryketh hem nature in hire corages
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes
To feerne halwes kouthe in sondry londes
And specially from euery shires ende
Of Engelond to Canturbury they wende
The holy blisful martyr for to seeke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke

Byfel that in that seson on a day
In Southwerk at the Tabbard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canturbury with ful deuout corage
At nyght was come in to that hostelrie
Wel nyne and twenty in a compayne
Of sondry folk by auenture I falle
In felaschipe and pilgrymes were they alle
That toward Canturbury wolden ryde
The chambres and the stables weren wyde
And wel we weren eised atte beste
And shortly whan the sonne was to reste
So hadde I spoken with hem euerychon
That I was of here felaweshipe anon
And made forward erly to aryse
To take our weye there as I zow deuyse
But nathelees whiles I haue tyme and space
Or that I ferther in this tale pace
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun
To telle zow alle the condicioun

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. (PROLOGUE.)

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (BRITISH MUSEUM.) LEAF 1, A.D. 1400-1425.

And also trewe ⁊ so was he to me.
I pray to god that sit in magestē.
So blisse his soule for his mercy dere.
Now wolle I say my tale if ye wille here.
Here endip ꝑ plog of ꝑ wif of Bathe. The wordis of ꝑ ffreere.
The ffreere lough whan he had herd all this.
Now dame ꝙ he so have I ioye or blis
This is a longe preamble of a tale.
And whan the Sompnour herd the ffreere gale.
Lo ꝙ the Sompnour goddis armes two. for
A ffreere will entrimete hym ever mo.
Lo good men a flie ⁊ eek a ffreere.
Wolle falle in every dische ⁊ eke mistere.
What spekist thou of preambulacioun
What amble or trotte or pees or go sitte adoun.
Thou lettist our disporte in this maneere.
ye wilt thou so Sompnour ꝙ the ffreere.
Now be my fay I schall or that I go.
Telle of a Sompnour suche a tale or two.
That all the folke schall laughen in this place.
Now elles ffreere I be schrewe thi face.
Quod this Sompnour ⁊ I be schrewe me.
But yef I telle the talis two or three.
Of ffreris or I come to Sidyngborne.
That I schall make thyn herte for to morne.
ffor wel I woot thi pacience is goon.
Our oost cried pees ⁊ that a noon.
And seide lete the woman telle hir tale.
ye fasten as folke that dronken ben of ale.
Do dame telle forth youre tale ⁊ that is best.
All redy sir ꝙ she right as you lest.
If I have licence of this worthi ffreere.
yee dame ꝙ he telle forth thi tale I wille here.
Here begynneth the tale of the wif of Bathe.

In the olde daies of the kyng Arthour.
Of whiche that Britons spekyn gret honour.
All was this londe fulfillid of fayrye.
The elf Quene with hir ioly compaynye.
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.
This was the olde opynyoun as I rede.
I speke of many an hundrid yere ago.
But now can no man se non elfys mo.
ffor now the gret charite ⁊ prayeres.
Of lymytours ⁊ other holy freres.
That serchen every londe ⁊ every streem.
As thikke as motis in the sonne beem.
Blissyng halles chambris toures.

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. FRIAR-SUM'NER LINK. WIFE'S TALE (MISPLACED.)

HARLEIAN MS. 1758. (BRIT. MUS.) LEAF 97, BACK. Ab. 1450 A.D.

pouhe ⁊ he ordeyn tel nouht pes pinces
Be it of popes emperour or kynges
And after hey age as me wieten finde
Wot tel hem some be fore some be hinde
And it comey nouhe to my remembrance
Have me excused of myne ignorance.
Explicat prologus. Incipit fabula de casibz viroz
Wil be weile ẽ maner off tregedie
pe maner off him pat standep in hihe degre
And felle so pat ꝑ was no remedie
Hem bringe hem out of hey adversite
ffor certeyne when pat fortune liste to flye
pere may nẽ may no man off his pe course hyp holde
Bepe war by pis ensample zonge & olde
De Lucifero
Of lucifer pouhe he an angele were
And nouht a man att him ⁊ wil begynne
ffor pehe fortou may none angel deve
ffrome hihe degre zit felt he fro his sinne
Doune into helle where as he zitte is nine
O lucifer brihtest off aungeles all
Wolde ert pou bathanas pat mast non tibynne
Wlo te off misery in whiche pou lest fall
De Adame. primo Hoie.
Of Adam in pe felde off damasene
Hy goddes owen finger wrouht was he
And nouht begeten off mannes sperme vnclene
And welde al paradise saue ouze o tre
Hadde neu̇ werldly man so hihe degre
As Adam til he for his gouernance
Was dreven oute off his hihe plesance
To labure & to helle & to mysschance.
De Sampsone.
To Sampson whiche was annunciate
Be pe angel longe ar his natiuite
And was god almyhty constraute
And stode in nobleste whiles he myht see
Was nen suche anof as was he
To speke off strenkep & ꝑ to hardinesse
Both to his wiftold he his secre.
pouhe whiche he slouhe hym self pouh wrecchednesse
De Hercules.

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES. MONK'S TALE (LUCIFER, ADAM, SAMSON.)

LANSDOWNE MS. 851, (BRIT. MUS.) LEAF 207, BACK, A.D. 1400-1425.

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